

The bigger picture in Illinois is equally devastating. Sequestration will cost Illinois more than 53,000 jobs and \$5.3 billion in the State's economic output. Nationwide, sequestration threatens our physical safety as well as our economy. Ten percent of the FAA's workforce could be furloughed, resulting in reduced air traffic control, longer delays, and economic losses for our tourism industries. Meat and poultry inspectors at USDA would also face furlough, potentially shuttering meat processing facilities and even affecting restaurants and grocery stores. Layoffs at the FDA would mean 2,100 fewer safety inspectors. There would be 25,000 fewer breast and cervical cancer screenings for low-income women. Mindless cuts to military and law enforcement affect our ability to protect our borders and meet the ever-present threat of terrorism, both here and abroad.

Madam Speaker, this is unacceptable. Somewhere along the way, buried in the din of the 24-hour news cycle and partisan bellowing, we lost the art of compromise. But that's what allowed the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s and saved Social Security in the 1980s. Legislators of both parties sat down and talked to each other, not past each other, to hammer out their differences and achieve something that made this country better.

I have no illusion that everyone in this body agrees with my ideas about reshaping Pentagon spending or reforming entitlements to ensure they provide benefits for generations to come; but I do know that making the changes that are best for the long-term interests of this country can't be accomplished overnight. These decisions require our best effort and precise planning. As the threat of sequester has painfully revealed, a chain saw is no way to create a budget for the most powerful country on Earth.

JUMP-STARTING THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POCAN. Madam Speaker, as a lifelong Wisconsinite and a proud resident of Madison for the last 30 years, I am deeply humbled and honored to represent Wisconsin's Second District in the House of Representatives. The Second District is home to a world-class university, innovative small businessowners, and hardworking dairy farmers and cheese makers who produce the best milk and cheese you can find.

I ran for Congress because I wanted to ensure these voices, the voices of south central Wisconsin, are heard, respected and represented in Washington. And I am committed to serving their needs by working with my colleagues—all of my colleagues—regardless of party affiliation. But I hate to say it, Madam Speaker, right now the people of Wisconsin's Second District are frus-

trated, and I understand why. When I went home last week, I met with people from all kinds of professions and all walks of life, and their concerns could not have been more different from what we talk about right here in Washington. What they care about is what all families care about: how can they make a living so they can pay their bills, provide for their loved ones, and create opportunities for their children.

They don't care about political finger-pointing. They care about how we in Congress can support an environment where businesses can attract more buyers for their products, hire more workers, and increase wages; in other words, how do we grow the economy.

What I told them, and what I'll repeat here today, is that the sequester and its irresponsible, indiscriminate and across-the-board spending cuts is the exact opposite of what we need to be doing right now to grow our economy. Taken as a whole, these spending cuts represent a harsh austerity policy that I fear could only move our country backwards.

We've seen in Europe the severe effects austerity policies have had on fragile economies working their way back from recessions. Four years after the global economic crisis, our friends across the ocean are at risk of a triple-dip recession. Unemployment is climbing; and even with these massive spending cuts, countries have seen their debt loads increase. Is this the model we want to follow in our country?

Madam Speaker, we must remember that the biggest threat to our long-term economic security is not the deficit. It's the economy. It's a lack of jobs, and it's about the more than 12 million people who are unemployed in this country.

I own a printing shop in Wisconsin; and as a small businessowner, I can tell you that it's about the lack of access to capital because of economic uncertainty, it's about a lack of consumer confidence, and it's about people needing to get back to work. These are the issues we need to address, not austerity; and we are not going to create jobs or help spur spending by gutting critical government programs without any thought to the consequences. To people in Wisconsin, that's just politics as usual.

We need to change the conversation right here in Washington. We need to be talking about what people are talking about in Beloit, in Baraboo, and in Sun Prairie. Instead of asking about how much we can cut, we need to be asking ourselves how we can jump-start the economy, how we can invest in our future, and how we can support our local small businessowners who are the backbone of our communities. That's how we'll fix the economy.

We need to support education, infrastructure projects, research and development, and new industries such as green energy that will help lead to job

growth and bring our unemployment rate down. And by growing the economy, we will fix our fiscal problems.

Now, that doesn't mean I don't see a place for responsible restraint. As the former chair of the Joint Finance Committee in Wisconsin, I understand that when you put together a budget, tough decisions have to be made, and you can stay up all night agonizing over the smallest details, the tiniest programs, because these programs make a difference in people's lives. It's a lot of work, and it should be, because our budget priorities have a direct effect on our middle class families and on long-term economic growth. But the sequester trades in the tough work and replaces it with massive, indiscriminate, and irresponsible spending cuts. It's like taking a meat cleaver to the budget instead of a scalpel.

It could cost 750,000 jobs nationwide, including 36,000 jobs right in Wisconsin. It could mean 70,000 students across the country, and 1,000 in my State, would see their Head Start services eliminated this year, and it would mean \$900 million less in loan guarantees to small businessowners nationwide, including in Wisconsin.

Now, I'm a cosponsor of a plan put forward by Representative VAN HOLLEN that would avert these disastrous spending cuts and replace them with a balanced approach that promotes economic growth while responsibly reducing the deficit. I strongly urge my colleagues to come to the table, stop this irresponsible sequester, and then refocus our efforts.

The time has come to stop talking about harmful spending cuts and start talking about getting the people of Wisconsin and of America back to work. We need less austerity and more prosperity. We don't have time to waste.

SEQUESTERATION AND WEST POINT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, earlier this week, I was home in the Hudson Valley at the United States Military Academy at West Point talking to the cadets there to better understand these arbitrary cuts to that legendary American institution that will happen if we fail to act.

West Point has been educating and training our Nation's next generation of military leaders since 1802. It is as old as the Nation itself. Each year, over 1,000 young men and women from all across our country step into the long gray line where two American Presidents, 18 astronauts, 74 Medal of Honor recipients, 70 Rhodes Scholars, and three Heisman Trophy winners have stood before them.

These kids take the hard road. They give up the easy life to serve us and our country. For many of them, their time

at the Point is just the beginning of a lifetime of selfless service. Indeed, scores of West Point graduates—recent West Point graduates—have made the ultimate sacrifice serving us in Iraq and Afghanistan.

While I was there, I had the opportunity, in fact, to walk among the graves of the heroes buried there on that beautiful plain high above the Hudson River. Many are buried by year with the classmates with whom they went to school.

Tomorrow, General Norman Schwarzkopf will be laid to rest in this cemetery; and in that very hour, we will be here facing a choice of whether we will ask more of those who love and serve West Point or whether we will look elsewhere.

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If we do nothing, sequestration will clobber West Point with \$92 million in arbitrary cuts. In fact, West Point is taking the biggest cut of any Army institution in New York. Sequestration means that our cadets will continue to live and train in outdated facilities that are over 40 years old. It means that furloughs will happen for 1,300 employees working there.

The men and women who feed, instruct, and protect our Nation's next generation of military leaders shouldn't lose their jobs because this Congress can't do ours. Sequestration is a terrible idea. It is the dead hand of the last Congress reaching out to strangle economic activity. We are 2 days away from the deadline, and there are people here who actually think it's a good idea to let it happen.

I believe we need to cut spending. I believe we need to bring down our debt and start balancing our deficit. But we have choices: we can end lavish tax breaks to private jet owners before we ask the kids at West Point to do with less; we can stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship our jobs overseas before we weaken the Long Grey Line; and we can end massive tax cuts for oil companies before we weaken a great American institution like West Point.

This Congress has a clear choice. And for those colleagues who choose to do nothing, I ask you to head home to your district and explain to the kids whom you nominated to West Point that these are good ideas and necessary sacrifices, that it's better for them to sacrifice than for private jet owners, for big oil companies, or for companies that ship our jobs overseas.

The Army's motto is "This we'll defend." West Point is something that we should defend because the cadets there will continue to honorably serve all of us and our country.

Congress doing nothing is not a choice. It's not good for our cadets, and it's not good for our country. Let's stop this series of self-inflicted crises and work together to reach a balanced compromise to replace these across-the-board cuts with a smart, balanced approach that will address our fiscal challenges.

SEQUESTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, it just came over the newswire a few minutes ago that on Friday morning, March 1, there will be a meeting at the White House involving President Obama, the leadership of the House, Speaker BOEHNER, and the leadership of the Senate, Senate Majority Leader REID to begin a process of talking about resolving the issue that we're obviously confronting as a Nation a few hours away, which is an automatic mechanism put into effect by the Budget Control Act of 2011 to cut discretionary spending across the board.

I begin with that point because, in fact, that really should have been happening months ago. In fact, that was the intent of sequestration, which is a mechanism that was created in 1985 by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation that set up the formula for sequestration that cut across defense and non-defense programs. And as Senator Phil Gramm, who was the inventor of sequestration, said in a speech a couple of years ago: It was never the objective of Gramm-Rudman to trigger sequester. The objective of Gramm-Rudman was to have the threat of sequester force compromise and action.

In other words, this was a mechanism that was designed to hurt. It was designed to create so much pain politically that the two sides, which again were in a similar point of gridlock in 1985, would begin the process of negotiation to deal with a structural deficit.

If you look at the history of what occurred from 1985 up until early 2000, that pressure actually did force Congress to face up to the fact that we could not continue to pile up deficits and burden our children and grandchildren with further debt. Unfortunately, in this present Congress, it's taken a little longer for the message to get through, but, nonetheless, the meeting that's scheduled on Friday morning hopefully is going to begin the process of having the two sides do what their predecessors did in the eighties and nineties and begin the process of a balanced plan to eliminate the structural deficit that our Nation confronts today.

Yesterday, President Obama was over in Newport News, Virginia, talking to shipyard workers about the fact that the Navy, which is obviously a critical part of our Federal Government, now has to hit spending cut targets over the next 7 months. We're 5 months into a fiscal year right now. They have begun the process of cancelling the refueling of the USS Lincoln, one of our 10 aircraft carriers which are so critical to force projection in this country. And he was absolutely right to be there. This is a program which, if it is cancelled or delayed, it's going to daisy-chain its way through our Navy's fleet

of 287 ships which must be repaired and maintained constantly to make sure that they're available for operations.

I represent southeastern Connecticut, the home of Electric Boat shipyard that builds and repairs nuclear submarines. We have the USS Providence slated to come in for a needed overhaul and repair later this fiscal year. The Navy has notified the shipyard that that work is going to be suspended. That's 200,000 man-hours for welders, for shipwrights, for machinists, for electricians that do amazing work with incredible skills to make sure that our fleet is capable of meeting the mission requests that are out there. The USS Miami, which is a submarine that was burned in an arsonist fire last year, is another repair job which EB was going to be on the road helping the shipyard workers in Kittery, Maine, to make sure that that critical vessel was going to be back in the fleet. That project has now been put on ice because of sequestration.

These are just totally irrational, destructive outcomes for a bill which was designed to force compromise. It was not to be a policy, not to be an outcome. When you look at Admiral Greenert, the CNO of the Navy, who is one of the most outstanding leaders in our country, he has cancelled the USS Harry Truman, which is a carrier strike force that was scheduled to go over to the Middle East to fly air-cover missions for our troops in Afghanistan, to keep the Strait of Hormuz open where 20 percent of the world's oil supply passes every single day. This is a policy or an outcome that threatens the military readiness of this country. Secretary Panetta at the Department of Defense and General Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, has made that crystal clear.

So the stakes could not be higher for our country to make sure that this process, which belatedly is starting on Friday morning, is going to result in smart, balanced ways to reduce the deficit.

I can offer one big idea that will get us to that point. I sit on the Agriculture Committee, which is a great bipartisan committee that's been working hard in terms of reforming ag policy in this country. It is time that the direct payment system to farms comes to an end. The good news is that Republicans and Democrats on that committee and Republicans and Democrats in this Chamber agree on that. We can help farmers deal with the vagaries of weather and unexpected events through risk insurance, which is far cheaper to the U.S. taxpayer than direct payments. That will save \$30 billion over the next 5 years. That is a huge step forward that we can use as a building block to avoid these horrible outcomes and make sure that Senator Gramm's warning to us is heeded by this Chamber and by this Congress.